

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-10 are all the claims currently pending in this Application.

Objection — Abstract

The Abstract of the Disclosure is objected to for containing two paragraphs. With this Amendment, Applicants amend the Abstract. Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the Abstract be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claim Amendments

With this Amendment, independent claims 1, 4, 7, and 10 are amended in order more fully to cover various aspects of Applicants' invention as disclosed in the specification. All amendments are fully supported in the originally-filed specification at least at the paragraph bridging pages 13 and 14. Entry of these amendments is respectfully requested.

Prior Art

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over Naruse (U.S. Patent 6,374,159) in view of Isono (U.S. Publication 2003/0000316). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Embodiments of the present invention provide a system and method for determining a change of a state of a vehicle due to a time-dependent change of the suspension/chassis, a change in the adjustment of the suspension, a change in internal pressure of the tire, and the like.

Specifically, a vehicle in an optimum alignment state of the suspension/chassis is run on a flat road surface as a reference, to measure the deviation of fluctuation, or a fluctuation rate, of a lateral force with respect to the optimum alignment state. This is the initialize mode measuring step.

Thereafter, after the vehicle has run a predetermined distance or after a predetermined time has elapsed after the initialize mode measuring step, the vehicle is run on the same flat road surface to measure a deviation of fluctuation, or a fluctuation rate, of the lateral force with respect to the optimum alignment state. This is the monitor mode measuring step.

A change of the alignment state (after the vehicle has run a predetermined distance or after a predetermined time has elapsed) is analyzed by comparing the initialize mode information and the monitor mode information.

In contrast, Naruse relates to an alignment adjusting method in which balancing forces generated in the front and rear tires are determined so that a steering characteristic is adjusted to a neutral state. That is, Naruse fails to disclose or suggest that a change of an alignment state of a vehicle is analyzed after the vehicle has run a predetermined distance or after a predetermined time has elapsed.

Further, in embodiments of the present invention, a lateral force *from all wheels* to the vehicle body is measured and analyzed. In contrast, in Naruse, each wheel is measured separately.

Finally, in Naruse, it is necessary that the tires pass over a “stepped surface”. In contrast, in the present invention, the vehicle runs on a flat road surface *both* in the initialize mode *and* in the monitor mode.

Isono fails to remedy these deficiencies of Naruse. Therefore, Applicants submit that independent claims 1, 4, 7, and 10 are patentable over the cited art and that claims 2, 5, 8, and 9 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependencies.

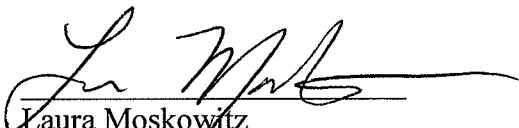
Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of these claims be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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